



Coal Harbour Residents' Association
PO Box 73535
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15 August 2013

Attn: Residents of Coal Harbour with Children

The Coal Harbour Residents' Association (CHRA) is distributing this information to residents with children living nearest to the Vancouver Harbour Flight Centre floatplane terminal.

With the floatplanes now in their permanent location, some residents remain concerned about potential air quality issues associated with floatplane exhaust. The CHRA's concerted attempts to have a comprehensive environmental study focussing on human health have been unsuccessful to date.

At the CHRA's Annual General Meeting in February, our guest speaker Dr. Paul Van Buynder, an expert in Public Health, spoke to our group about several issues, including negative impacts to health from the emissions of AvGas—a leaded fuel used by some of the smaller floatplanes. As you are aware, leaded fuel has been banned from automobile gas for some time because of negative health effects, particularly on children.

To begin to assess the human health impacts associated with the floatplanes in Coal Harbour, Dr. Van Buynder has written a comprehensive letter for residents with children to consider. Any questions you have should be directed to him, as he has stated.

Regards,

Neil Chahal

Neil Chahal
President, Coal Harbour Residents' Association

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12th August 2013

Dear Resident of Coal Harbour

Re: Potential impact of lead containing Avgas from float planes in Vancouver Harbour.

I write on behalf of the Coal Harbour Residents Association (CHRA) after being approached by a large number of people in the Coal Harbour area to provide a medical opinion with regard to the recent expansion of the permanent Coal Harbour Float Centre facility on the western rather than the eastern side of the previous permanent site.

I am a Public Health Physician of more than 20 years standing, and have spent many years as a provincial medical lead on environmental health issues and risk assessments. I currently hold professorships in the School of Population Health at the University of Western Australia and at Simon Fraser University in the School of Health Sciences.

The decision by PavCo to approve this expansion rather than requiring it on the Eastern side exposes the residents of Coal Harbour to lead containing Avgas. Recent testing of dust on balconies confirmed that lead was being deposited there.

Some of the health effects of repeated exposure to lead include damage to the central nervous system, kidneys and red blood cells, and decreased function in the cardiovascular and immune systems. Lower IQ levels and learning disabilities can also result from lead exposure, especially in children, whose young bodies are more sensitive than those of adults. The US National Toxicology Program has concluded that lead and lead compounds are "reasonably anticipated to be human carcinogens."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognizes lead as a neurotoxin and in 2008 set tough new standards for how much of it is safe in air. A 2011 Duke University study found that children living within 500 meters of an airport where leaded avgas is used have higher blood lead levels than other children, with elevated lead levels in blood found in children as far as one km away.

I am unsure how much exposure is occurring from the float plane activity. We know that some planes burn lead containing fuel and that lead is being deposited when no obvious other source exists. What is not clear is whether the area children are showing elevated blood lead levels because of this. The presence of elevated lead levels in children is treatable and would also be a mechanism for altering float plane activity as a public health risk.

Blood lead levels in children can be readily assessed by your medical care provider. If you have a young child in your home and would like to exclude any impact from the lead in the air, please take this letter to your doctor, ask them to order a blood lead test, and ask them to copy me with the result so we can assess the overall risk. Please email me if you have queries.



Paul Van Buynder

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